

A shortened statutory period for response of two (2) months was set for response to the Office Action. Accordingly, this response is considered timely since it is being submitted on or before June 5, 2006.

REMARKS

Claims 1-55, 57, 59-192 are presently pending in the application. Claims 44-74 and 185-190 have been previously withdrawn from consideration, and claims 1-43, 75-184, 191 and 192 are presented for consideration by the Examiner. Every issue and informal requirement raised in the Office Action has been addressed by this Response.

The April 5, 2006 Office Action agreed with Applicant's prior arguments made in Response C and withdrew the undue multiplicity rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. The Office Action did, however, informally require Applicant to submit a listing of all pending claims briefly summarized and grouped according to their common subject matter, which may be done through a chart, graph, or list. The Office Action further noted that such information should not exceed one or two pages in length. It should be noted that while various features of the independent claims are summarized below, many of the claims may include common or dominant elements, which have not been summarized below, and are sufficiently similar to merit examination in the same application. In order to be responsive to the informal requirement raised in the Office Action,

Applicant submits the following chart summarizing and grouping claims for substantive examination.

| CLAIM IN CURRENT APPLICATION | BRIEF SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER |
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| Independent Claims | |
| Claim 1, 75 and 92 | Independent claims 1, 75 and 92 are directed, at least in part, to a tapered locking fit between structural components. |
| Claim 27, 109 and 127 | Independent claims 27, 109 and 127 are directed, at least in part, to a frictional engagement between structural components. |
| Claim 144 | Independent claim 144 is directed, at least in part, to frictional engagement between structural components and axes of a connecting member not being co-linear, and forming an angle greater than zero degrees. |
| Claims 160 and 175 | Independent claims 160 and 175 are directed, at least in part, to a method of intercoupling structural components in a static, frictional engagement. |
| Dependent Claims | |
| Claims 2, 7, 9, 10, 12, 18, 30, 32, 33, 78, 80, 81, 95, 97, 98, 115, 116, 128, 129, 132, 133, 147, 149, 177, 191 | Directed, at least in part, to various features of a connecting member (or a connecting means). |
| Claims 3, 11, 13, 14, 20-26, 28, 31, 37-43, 76, 79, 85-91, 93, 96, 102-108, 110, 114, 120-126, 131, 137-143, 145, 148, 153-159, 161-168, 173, 176, 178-184 | Directed, at least in part, to various features of a fastening member (or an attaching means). |
| Claims 4, 5 | Directed, at least in part, to various features of a set screw. |

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| Claims 6, 15, 19, 29, 34, 77, 82, 94, 99, 111, 113, 117, 130, 134, 146, 150, 171, 172 | Directed, at least in part, to various features of an elongate support member. |
| Claims 8, 19, 34, 82, 99, 117, 134, 150, 171, 172, | Directed, at least in part, to various features of a stem member. |
| Claims 16, 35, 83, 100, 118, 135, 151, 174, | Directed, at least in part, to various features of a disengaging means. |
| Claims 17, 36, 84, 101, 119, 136, 152 | Directed, at least in part, to various features of an aligning means. |
| Claims 169, 170 | Directed, at least in part, to various features of an intercoupling means. |

In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes that all of the claims under examination are allowable, and a finding of the same is respectfully requested. If any impediment to the allowance of these claims remains after entry of this Response paper and consideration of these remarks, and such impediment could be alleviated during a telephone interview, the Examiner is invited to initiate the same.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee or to credit any overpayment in connection with this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 50-0836.

DATED this 5 day of June, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,



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